

CHESSMAN BOMBS'ON THE ROAD'

JOKER RUNS WILD

by Jude Acers

Everyone knows that he is crazy, a fool. This is your chance to laugh at him. He will twice be robbed and beaten. His family is all dead. His luggage will be wiped out in a cheap Seattle hotel. He watches his friends, Janis Joplin and Ralph and Sue Kellogg, begin to die of heroin addiction. He walks around North Beach in rags. He will run out of money, starve, and everyone is pointing at the fool, laughing. He is in the Coffee Gallery and 12 Adler Place and Vesuvio's, hustling more than 10,000 games of chess for quarters, nickels and (once) pennies. He gives 65 prison and hospital chess lectures and simultaneous chess exhibitions, while the U.S. Chess Foundation spit upon him and curtly dismiss his begging letters for money. Shig the Great lends him buck after buck in City Lights Bookstore to keep him alive. Shig does not know that he is the greatest of them all. Specs Adler gives him a free coffee and friendly wink and tells him about the great ship escape just one more time. Specs just knows that he is a character, not the greatest of them all. Albert Raymond, a San Francisco crack mechanic and jack of all trades allows him to sleep on the Tenderloin hotel room floor on this last night. The Fischer engine, two thousand miles away, is angry and cranking up, ready to kill Taimanov in Vancouver one year from this day. It is dawn. His name is Acers. He will now become a millionaire. Jude Acers hits...

THE ROAD.

Part 4

(the true story of the world's number one lecture and exhibition player) 5,000 MILES:

ODYSSEY...MY BACK PAGES

So you're to give a nationwide tour of prisons, hospitals, children's homes, and maybe clubs, too. Uh-huh. Sounds like a starvation manual and a walk through Death Valley barefooted in one day. But okay, here's what to do about knocking them dead, coast to coast.

Begin by reading "Adventures of a Chess Master" by George Koltanowski, a thoroughly entertaining book which illustrates how you play, lecture, travel, and personality must be systematically enthusiastic at all points if you intend to bind body and soul together at the end of 1971.

Here we go. Rule number one is to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, three hoodlums hold you up and dump you in a ditch in a bad news neighborhood. They take your shoes, wallet, and papers. By a miracle, you are unharmed as they drive away,



leaving you with \$154 in your left pants' pocket. You are laughing hysterically at this irony, but still must wind your way out of the involved, right? Right. The old man sticks at 3 a.m. All the addresses and phone numbers are scratched off highway telephone booths, so you can't tell cab company or police where you are.

And you keep moving for hours until you see the most beautiful structure on earth--the eight wonder of the world--a yellow cab. And again you survive against bad odds because you are a good guy, brilliant, and, oh so quiet and modest. Your shirt is covered with blood and scares the taxi driver. You are unharmed, shoeless, shaken. You mumble, "3001 Chestnut," and make a getaway. The cabby is courteous and glad you survived. So are your girlfriends!

In Pasco, Washington, you are making a plane connection. You wanted to go by bus and told your nationwide tour manager (Russell W. Miller) exactly that. Your uncanny instincts which have saved your life at least six times are right again. An old man is getting on the plane, a heavy equipment salesman. He's crippled and having trouble getting his sales material aboard. "Hi! I'll take that," you

say and haul the heaviest contraptions aboard. Can't mind your own business, can you? Just have to get the involved, right? Right. The old man is very grateful. As you climb aboard a knockout stewardess says, "Hi, what is that?" You smile and say, "Well, ma'am, I don't know, really, but I certainly hope it's not a bomb." Two minutes pass. "Where's the joker, Miss Reynolds? Just show me where he is!" the captain is screaming. Boom, you're off the plane despite pleading and courtesy. You're stuck in Pasco overnight with no cash to speak of. But your first problem is how to get out of the airline terminal alive and well. The captain tells you, "I called the FBI and local police every time I've done this. But you're obviously a nice chap. Let this be a lesson to you." Yeah. Suddenly you're in bad trouble, anyway. The whole airline terminal watches you. The airport security police are crawling around the telephone booth, eyes aglow with unsavory intentions of mashing you somehow. You phone long distance three times in four minutes flat. Eugene Warner, your host when you'd given exhibitions here earlier, advises, "Check the train schedules. 25 cents for 1 1/2 hours of travel by

Get out of there." You move out of the last available bus, baby. Naturally, you're already hungry, having neglected to eat much in the past day or so (a lady has seduced you with her many charms aboard her father's yacht). The first ten hours of the ride are killing. No time to phone San Francisco insurance millionaire Karl Bach. No time to contact Karl W. Cavanaugh, a crack Denham Springs, Los Angeles attorney, who has whisked you out of several terrific jams before. You're just on a bus, miserable and starving. No help from driver or passengers. (New Yorkers are cold?!) That's when you meet her. Beautiful, luscious 60-year-old Fay Moore in the Blytheville, Arkansas bus station. Miss Moore, over the strenuous objection of her supervisor, buys three slurpy, good sandwiches to help a great American chess master survive the night. You reward her with a simultaneous eating exhibition. First, she saw all three sandwiches and then she didn't. Her supervisor warns, "He'll never pay, Fay. You're just throwing your money in the dirt." Silently, you curse the supervisor. The sandwiches are \$1.50 And you know that not even God himself is going to prevent 60-year-old Fay Moore from getting ten times her money in return. You get her address on a dirty, coffee-stained napkin, writing with a half-broken black Bic pen. And you climb back on the bus, saved.

Now things really begin to happen. Russell Miller is cracking up with laughter at the whole mess, but recovers when he realizes you're in bad trouble. "We should call the FBI," the station manager is told by a secretary as you left the airline terminal. Everybody waits and the rescue train is on the way. Will Jude cers get out of Pasco, Washington alive or will he be gunned down at the station at dawn? Two city policemen, aware of what has happened, walk into the train depot and size you up. Scary, man, scary. You are courteous, supercool. "Yes, sir; no, sir. I don't know, officer." They leave. Telephone calls to people begin to fly into Pasco, Washington. Miller is hard at work at saving your hide. He checks seats available sooths, calms, and tries to get you out of town before the goblins get you.

Jude Acers, public enemy number 1, is aboard the 2 a.m. special and steams toward Seattle, where Vladimir Pafnutieff, veteran Russian and U.S. master, is waiting to whisk you away. Pafnutieff realizes how really scary and truly dangerous the whole experience was for you. One explosion of temper, one false step and you would have shared the fate of all those before you, the caboose for ninety days or worse. After this, Russell Miller books through flights to keep you out of trouble. Pafnutieff had met the plane in Seattle the night before. No Jude Acers! "What happened?" he asked the captain. "Nicest guy I ever put off of the plane. Called the police all the other times," the captain told Pafnutieff. Yeah. Other things are going to happen that are right from Boris Karloff's late, late show reruns. Fate really is ready with the axe on your New Orleans-St. Louis bus ride. Picture this unbelievable scene:

You've got ten minutes before your St. Louis bus leaves. Naturally, your four suitcases of chess literature (world's largest portable chess library) has been lost by the bus company five days before, but easily found a day later. Naturally, the night watch has NOT been told that no storage fees are required for lost luggage being at last reclaimed by the owner. He hits you for \$19.75 and that leaves YOU with 25 cents for 1 1/2 hours of travel by

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When you hit St. Louis, you storm after your \$19.75, but it isn't necessary. The bus company says, "We're sorry," and refunds it. Then all you can think of is that little lady and her ugly, unfeeling supervisor. You blast to a mailbox and plop Miss Moore's reward into the box. Now, only now, you give yourself permission to relax, even die if need be.

It is 10 p.m. in St. Louis, Missouri on September 9, 1971. Miss Moore and Jude Acers have won. The supervisor and the cold, unfeeling creatures of the world like her have lost again. You will remember Miss Moore's eyes, her smile, her trembling fear of her supervisor as she fought back from the mundane nothingness that surrounds her every working hour in Blytheville, Arkansas. Your first annotated game collection will be dedicated to her, your next three prison exhibitions already have been. Nobody at the exhibitions knows who Miss Fay Moore is, but you know, don't you? And you are the luckiest person who ever lived, Jude Acers!